

Good morning. My name is Pam Rubenstein and I am the second generation owner and CEO of Allied Specialty Precision, Inc. in Indiana. My company was founded in 1954 and today has grown to 85 employees. We produce precision aerospace component parts serving the hydraulic, fuel control, and braking systems of every commercial and military aircraft that flies in the U.S. today.

Since 1954, Allied Specialty Precision, Inc. (ASPI) has built a thriving precision manufacturing business on a solid foundation of continuous innovation, uncompromising quality, and outstanding customer service. As the company expanded, so did its reputation for innovation and problem-solving. That reputation, as well as its machining expertise, is an integral part of the company, and continues at Allied Specialty Precision to this day. Today, Allied Specialty Precision is a top-quality precision manufacturing facility with 26,000 square feet of manufacturing space, highly skilled employees, a solid management team, and a company-wide spirit of excellence built on fifty-four years of quality and customer service. Allied performs a wide range of processing including CNC machining; gear manufacturing, O.D., surface and Blanchard grinding; wire EDM; EDM small hole drilling; honing; broaching; brazing; pressure, leak and load testing; passivation; deburring and assembly.

Since I bought my business in 2005, I am proud to say that we have added a major customer, doubled sales, increased employment, and purchased 5 major machine tools. We have invested over \$1.5 million in the last year alone in equipment and training. The advanced manufacturing business is expensive and competitive. And, even with our

strong effort, it is clear to me that implementing the Women's Federal Procurement Program would be a terrific boost to my company and employees.

Direct federal contracts are very important to our growth and our movement into new industry sectors. The only industry we currently serve is aerospace. Right now, as you all know, aerospace is booming and the outlook for the next 10 years is excellent. But all business, even advanced manufacturing, is cyclical.

I need to begin to prepare for the eventual downturn in aerospace manufacturing now so that my employees and their families will be protected in the future. The Women's Federal Procurement Program would be an amazing asset in this endeavor. If the federal government is encouraged to seek out woman-owned manufacturers, I would see more potential work, could quote more, and find my way into other industries.

Allied Specialty Precision, Inc. does not play on a level playing field. Unfortunately, many daily challenges arise simply because I am a woman. Business people – bankers, insurance brokers, tool salespeople, machinery brokers, etc. – are all shocked when they call or visit my shop. Many men are so taken aback at the fact that we are woman-owned that they can't look me in the eye during a conversation! We may be talking about my purchasing a \$500,000 machine, but they just can't seem to get past my being female.

Two years ago I attended the International Manufacturing Technology Show in Chicago. It's a huge venue dedicated to showcasing the latest in machine tools, technology,

software, etc. for advanced manufacturing plants. I had been to the tool show many times during my years at Allied, but this was the first time I was there as a business owner.

And I had a mission at that show – I was shopping for a \$500,000 five-axis simultaneous mill – a very high-tech, specialized piece of equipment that I needed to manufacture parts for hydraulic pumps in aircraft. As you might imagine, most booths at the show were staffed by men giving out information, answering questions, and writing quotes.

As I entered the booths of manufacturers who offered such machines, most of the salesmen ignored me. One asked, “What do YOU want?” Another asked me whether my husband was out shopping since I was at the tool show. When I told them what I was looking for, their jaws dropped. But not one of those men apologized or offered me the information I was seeking. Obviously, they did not get my business or my money. Since that show, I have purchased 2 five-axis simultaneous mills – from a company that took me seriously.

Just yesterday, I had a telephone call from a customer who wants to come visit our shop. We are always open for customers – for any visitors, in fact. I’m very proud of my facility and my employees. The bottom line is that without our employees, there wouldn’t be a company. The customer who’s coming to visit later this week ended our conversation by asking me to make his plane reservations between New York and South Bend, find him a hotel, and tell him how to get around town. He certainly wouldn’t have asked that of a male business owner! Needless to say, if he really comes to visit us, he will have made his own travel reservations.

So why does the Small Business Administration feel that advanced manufacturing businesses owned by women should not be one of the industries selected for the Women's Procurement Program? Not a day goes by that we don't have some issue over my gender. Obviously, those issues have not shut us down, but they've certainly slowed our growth. My employees and their families deserve the best I can offer them – and I can offer them more if I can attract more work – especially from industries new to us.

In addition, I am an active member in the National Tooling & Machining Association (NTMA), serving as Education Team Leader and co-leader of their workforce development initiative – Precision Jobs for American Manufacturing. NTMA is one of the largest metalworking associations in America.

Every product that is manufactured is formed by a tool, die, or mold made by our industry. Manufacturing companies like mine contribute more to the economy than just employment and spending. The self-sufficiency of the U.S. manufacturing sector rests squarely on the shoulders of a strong domestic tooling industry.

Our \$40 billion industry employs 200,000 workers in 11,000 companies across the nation (Bureau of Labor Statistics data - 2005). Tool and die makers are some of the best-paid workers in the country, making approximately \$47,000 per year. The majority of our

operations are small, family-owned businesses. In fact, ninety percent of all tool and die shops employ less than 50 people. I am proud to be an owner in this strong and independent manufacturing industry.

I ask the support of Congress to assure that the SBA amend the proposed rules for the implementation of the Women's Procurement Program to include manufacturing. We are ready to step up to new heights in business and we hope Congress will act to support women business owners. Thank you.